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THE ANCIENT ASTRONAUT THEORY AND PREHISTORIC ROCK ART: SOME CRITICAL COMMENTS

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The existence of extraterrestrial intelligence and the likelihood of their having visited Earth on many different occasions, altering the course of human history, tends to throw into doubt the principles of archaeology and history, which up to now have been considered as a more or less scientific truth, and suggest the necessity for complete rethinking in many fields.

Archaeological research has given the illusion that there could be no involvement of the ancient astronauts in human history, because according to traditional view there is no evidence to support this theory. That is why it is necessary to really examine the archaeological and mythological evidence and do some serious self-analyses about the way ancient astronaut theory has worked so far.

If you are going to claim any scientific credibility, you must do scientific research. There is a pressing need to break out of the model of pseudoscience and admit to a scientific approach. There may be different opinions on the matter, but I think that this is an issue worth debating openly. You must challenge the traditional scientific belief system using scientific methods. In the long run, this will be the only way to carry on. After all, knowledge is traditionally gained through a slow process and a lengthy period of time. Basic research produces new knowledge, and can create new ways of looking at issues. That is why it is so important that RIAP has been established in Ukraine to examine scientifically these matters for the first time.

Interpreting prehistoric rock art

What is rock art? Rock art is a picture or a group of pictures that have been hewn, cut, chiselled or painted on rocky slopes, on vertical rock faces or on boulders of varying size. Interpreting prehistoric rock art is one of the many difficulties in archaeological research. Rock art is trying to tell us something that an ancient man thought important enough to immortalize in stone. Archaeologists are now trying to reconstruct a model of explanation that makes sense to us with the aid of belief systems found in indigenous cultures.

Traditionally, the content of prehistoric culture has been shamanism, a system of beliefs typical of hunting cultures. Hence, it has been logical to interpret animals and other images in rock art as ritualistic success and return images for the lords of the animals and at the same time as central cosmic symbols of an animal centered world view. This is of course partly true, but by no means all rock art can be

explained on the basis of shamanism. It is very difficult to connect the abstract and geometric figures directly with any system of beliefs. It is possible that they represent something entirely different that we have not yet learned. Nowadays even improved documentation techniques have changed the interpretation of petroglyphs in many cases from those brought forward earlier.

Rock art can be seen as a phenomenon of many dimensions, and it is too hasty to define the relationship between all the elements it contains: shamanism, totemism, hunting magic, fertility cult, cosmology, the esthetic element and even the supposed universal influence of the ancient astronauts. It is evident that these functions operate side by side and simultaneously. Rock art, like religion or myths, also contains a strong irrational element which makes accurate interpretation rather difficult.

A Hungarian archaeologist, Mihaly Hoppál (1), has constructed an ethno-semiotic research method to better explain the meaning of rock art. It is divided into three parts of methods, the syntactic (studying the relations between symbols), the semantic (studying the relations between the symbol and the object), and pragmatic (studying the relations between the symbol and its user). I would like to add also a fourth method, the universal/mythological (studying the relations between the symbol and various universal myths). If we work from these premisses, we may be better able to analyze all rock art. Most of it is in groups with lots of figures in each group. If we can accurately interpret some groups to be connected with each other, it is called a composition. From a scientific point of view, a composition is very interesting, because it contains an idea that reveals the mind of an ancient man.

As we have seen so far, most of the discussion about rock art has been focused on the ideas that inspired their creation. There is also the problem of accurately dating them. In most parts of the world, the chronology of the rock art correspond to the general archaeological chronology of the region. This means that when investigating the historical long-term dynamics, the main changes in the rock art should correspond to changes in technology, artefact types, social structure and the evolution of human thought. At the same time, there are continuities found in the selectivity of the motifs depicted in the rock art and in subsistence orientation.

The selectivity and the making of rock art to express symbolic meanings indicate that it was probably made by shamans, who controlled and preserved a tribe's cultural symbology. The shamans were most likely a link between rock art, public rituals and the members of a society. As such, it was the shamans who controlled content, context and the style within the belief and ideological framework of the society.

If there had been sometime in the human past, maybe thousands of years ago, a face to face contact with extraterrestrials, the most likely person to contact them or interpret their activities to a tribe was probably a shaman, the spritual leader of the tribe. Thus we must direct our attention particularly towards the activities of them. However, the relationship between shamans and the members of the tribe in which they functioned also means that changes in belief and ideology, which perhaps can be seen a.o. in rock art, were unlikely to be introduced and accepted unless there was a collective or group consciousness among the tribe's members.

The evolution of the prehistoric man's thinking is supposed to reflect many different phases: a.o. totemistic and cosmic. The predominance of the latter is implied in the abundance of sun and moon symbols, sun boats, cosmic totem

figures and possible calendars. What caused ancient man to take the leap from animism and hunting magic to the cosmic consciousness? Could it be that it was there that the supposed influence of the extraterrestrial visitors changed the thinking of the prehistoric man? Obviously the landing of the "gods" would have been such a powerful event that would have introduced new ideas and concepts that might have easier been more acceptable in large areas, because of the example of practise and by the probability that there would have been a whole series of contemporaneous influences brought in by migration, common experience or many other ways. Also, there might have been changes in the power structure of the societies to such an extent that the changes were enforced. Also if the ancient astronauts came here many times, they probably must have left behind some physical proof of their presence. So if we use scientific methods when examining ancient rock art, symbols and myths in detail, we should find some clues pointing to possible physical proof of them maybe in quite obvious form, provided of course that they really have landed on Earth in the past.

What to do now?

So, are there enough empirical data indicating that such ET-connections really existed? The continuity of shamanism and oral tradition has preserved evidence of the original myths of the ancient tradition to researchers to examine them. And there is some interesting possible evidence of rock art depicting the "gods" found all over the world. With this in mind, researchers could feed data from all over the world into computers to determine the comparative similarities among empirical descriptions of the "gods" and hewn or painted symbols to determine whether these descriptions are nothing more than the creations of ancient mankind's imagination. Experts in archaeology, primitive art and many other fields could examine this data to find out if there could have been a direct or indirect extraterrestrial influence.

We must also make it clear to ourselves what kind of proofs are we looking for. As Dr. Pasquel S. Schievella (2) has reminded there are many kinds of proof. The proof can be not only empirical, observational, experimental or inductive, but also theoretical, logical, mathematical, hypothetical, deductive, statistical, probable and documentary. Of course they must be directly or indirectly verifiable and compatible with a comprehensive body of relevant facts, theories and hypothesis. Although all this is scientifically valid, we know very well that in this case the existing circumstantial evidence is not enough to change the course of the science. As I have pointed out earlier the difficulties to interpret for example prehistoric rock art are quite big. So we desperately need scientific theory, methodology and basic research that can bring out some "hard" evidence to back up the circumstantial evidence. We need scientific projects promoted financially perhaps jointly by RIAP, Ancient Astronaut Society and others and we need weighing the situation as openly as possible with all those concerned, if we are going to make progress in this matter. #

References:

- (1) Mihaly Hoppál; Siperian kalliomaalaukset ja samanismi. Suomen Antropologi 3/1985.
- (2) Pasqual S. Schievella; Proof, science and the ancient astronaut hypothesis. Ancient Skies 4:2, May-June 1977.



Pre-Columbian rock glyphs discovered on Santo Domingo in the Antilles.



This rock painting was found from Salmaly-Tash in the mountains of Tiensan. It is probably from about 1000 B.C. and according to the archaeologists it represents sun-worship rituals. Or is this proof of a possibly extraterrestrial contact?



Archaeologist Henri Lhote found this famous rockpainting from Tassili site in the Sahara. This image has been said to be an alien in a space suit by Erich von Däniken and others, or is it an illustration of a local inhabitant in ritual garb from so called "round-head style" about 6000 B.C.

STRANGE OBSERVATIONS FROM OULU

Interesting radar observations were made by University of Oulu in 1990 and 1993. Astronomer Kari Kaila tells about them: "We had an optical and EISCAT radar campaign in December 1990. We measured with EISCAT radar (about 900 MHz) along magnetic field line: Azimuth 182.6 degrees and elevation angle 77.5 degrees. The radar beam has a width of 0.6 degrees. First detection was 10th Dec 1990 at 22:42:40 UT. Satellite type signal was detected at an altitude of 122 km. The repetition period was 0.2 seconds. But signal was visible 22:42:40 - 22:43:40. That means 1 minute and the radar beam width is only 0.6 degrees. So the angular speed should be around 0.6 degrees/min. During this time the distance of the satellite increased about 6 km. Okay, but we found similar signal also on other days. Later the signal occurred 4 minutes earlier. So the revolution time should really be about 23 hours 56 minutes. Does anybody know which satellite this is and what distance it has during these observations. We found this signal on several days."

Kari Kaila continues: "More interesting phenomena. On another optical and radar campaign we found from videotapes a very intensive phenomenon. At the beginning it looked like a meteor, but suddenly it brightened to a very big object and faded away. On 25th Jan 1993 at 00:40:57 - 00:41:03 UT a meteor or a satellite entered the atmosphere at location 69 degrees N and 21 degrees E. Its magnitude was at least -15!! It was much brighter than the full moon!!! It is visible on two or three videotapes. In one of the tapes it is well visible, in another only the beginning of the phenomenon is visible, but then we can see two sudden brightenings or explosions. We have seen this also in photometers."

An American satellite-expert Mike McCants commented these phenomena: "I would naturally jump to the conclusion that the Jan '93 observation really was a meteor. Fireballs of magnitude -15 are rare but not all that rare. The very short duration would tend to support this, I assume... The first case is very puzzling. My first thought was that it could have been one of the very large number of 12 hour synchronous objects at an apogee range of 37000 km. The 12 hour synchronous objects would return after 23h 56m. The other class of Russian objects like this would go over at 10000 km and might move through the radar beam in about a minute. Also the US GPS-satellites are at about 20000 km and so too are the Russian Glonass-satellites. They would move very slowly..."

(Ursa Minor 6/93)

RIAP BULLETIN

RIAP Bulletin (RB) is the official newsletter of the Research Institute on Anomalous Phenomena (RIAP) that has been established in 1992 by the Kharkov-based Aerospace Company "Vertical". The Institute aims at scientific studies in the field of non-classical SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence). RIAP has started its newsletter "RIAP Bulletin" (RB), published in English. The first issue of RB has been printed and is being sent out. It contains the papers "Astrodynamical Aspect of Paleovisatology" by A.V. Arkhipov and "UFOs as Objects of Study by Terrestrial Physics" by V.A. Buerakov. In next issues there will appear, in particular, a survey of the problem of the famous Tunguska explosion, written by the leading Russian specialist on this problem - Dr. Nikolay V. Vasiliev, Member of Academy; a series of papers by A.V. Arkhipov, dealt with the search for artificial ET objects on the Moon; a paper of A.V. Beletsky on the current state of affairs in the postSoviet ufology; a report on examination of the "Kassimov ball" - a supposed ET artifact, found in the former Soviet Union a few years ago, and many other materials.

The Bulletin is distributed among RIAP Fellows and Donators. For further details please contact through mail (RIAP/RB, P.O.Box 4684, 310022 Kharkov-22, Ukraine), fax (+7 0572 79 11 11), or e-mail (riap@office.kharkov.ua).

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